News of Books and Their Authors

Dedications, it appears, are distinctly the literary vogue at present. Of course, they aren't what they used to be, for in their beginnings they always elicited a handsome gift to the author from the person whose name was thus immortalized on the flyleaf. But authors do not need the money as much as they did then; the old custom now is of the purest courtesy, the consideration being one recognized at law "for love and affection." For such reasons ARCHIBALD MARSHALL dedicates his "Pippin" to G. K. CHESTERTON, and JOHN DOS PASSO his "Pushcart at the Curb" to "the memory of Wright McCormick, who tumbled off a mountain in Mexico," and therefore probably doesn't care what else happens to him. To RAY LONG "Broken Barriers" is dedicated by MEREDITH NICHOLSON, "cryptically" in token of the old Hoosier fellowship of Montgomery and Boone. The mothers of the respective writers are honored by REBECCA WEST and TRISTRAM TUPPER in "The Judge" and "The House of Five Swords." HENRY JAMES FORMAN dedicates "The Man Who Lived in a Shoe" to his wife, and so does STEPHEN VINCENT BENET devote "Young People's Pride" to his. HUGH WALPOLE dedicates "The Cathedral" to JOSEPH CONRAD and his wife; Joseph Conrad's wife, that is, for Mr. Walpole has none. JOHN COURNOS inscribes his novel "Babel" to two persons: Part I to Olivia Shakespeare and Part II to EDWARD J. O'BRIEN. But Cabell's "Figures of Earth" is dedicated to six or seven persons, a section to each, whose names the curious may look up for themselves.

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The journey described by MAJOR E. ALEXANDER POWELL in his latest travel book, "By Camel and Car to the Peacock Throne," is not the author's first experience of the Near East. Major Powell lived in Greece some years before the war, in a house whence he could see the Acropolis and the mountains that in turn "look on Marathon." With his wife he also spent half a year on one of the Isles of the Princes, in the Sea of Marmora. This was in the bad old days of Abdul the Damned, and Powell struck up a close friendship with the Sultan's naval adviser, who was also an American. Immediately after this Major Powell secured by cable the appointment of Vice-Consul General at Beirut, and the next year filled the same position at Alexandria, Egypt. From thence he traveled southward to the Blue Nile and westward to the borders of Tripolitana, crossing the desert with the famous Egyptian Camel Corps. Mrs. Powell has accompanied her husband on all his wanderings, excepting through Arabia and into Central Asia, which is another story.

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A posthumous volume on "Statues of New York" by the late J. SANFORD SALTUS, which Putnams have just brought out, may at last shed some light upon the vexed question of who chooses New York's public monuments, and why. Mr. Saltus himself was the donor of the Joan of Arc statue, by ANNA VAUGHN HYATT, on Riverside Drive, and of the Poe bust in the Hall of Fame of New York University. He had a special devotion to the Maid of Orleans, and defrayed part of the expense of other memorials to her at Rouen, Blois, Nice, New Orleans and Joan's native village of Domremy. This interest led him to study public sculpture in general and that of New York in particular, and he compiled a complete history of all the statues ever erected in this city, including those which have been taken down and forgotten

Robert Frost, a caricature by Djuna Barnes

by the public. Mr. Saltus had barely finished this work when he died in London. He never saw a printed copy of it.

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The publishing house of Duffield itself is authority for a story to the effect that burglars recently broke into their stock

Eugene O'Neill, a caricature by Djuna Barnes

room and went away again without touching a volume of the many stacked up ready for sale or shipment. This episode has somewhat shaken their faith in the persuasive powers of the National Association of Book Publishers' poster: "Take a Book Along."

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A first novel, boldly entitled "Futility," by WILLIAM GERHARDI, which will be brought out next month, has several points of novelty about it. It is a novel of Russian life, but written by an Englishman who was born in Russia and has spent many years there. Also, it will be observed, he has a German name; a truly international novel should be the result.

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HAMLIN GARLAND is just starting on a lecture tour of New England, and when he gets to Boston he intends to look up the attic where he received the inspiration to write his first story. It is the cold west top room in a house numbered 21 Severns Avenue. Mr. Garland was living there as a student, and one day heard through the window the sound of a man unloading coal into the cellar chute below. The noise resembled, to his homesick ear, that produced by shoveling corn into a crib, at the end of harvest, on the Iowa farm which was Mr. Garland's home. And the resultant story was called "A Western Corn Husking" and was accepted for publication without undue delay by a New York editor.

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RUTH SAWYER, a favorite author among readers of the women's magazines, was a professional story teller for children before she began to write. She was recently given a special invitation for three talks at the New York Public Library by Miss Anne Carroll Moore, the head of the children's department. In private life Miss Sawyer is Mrs. Albert C. Durand, of Syracuse. Her latest novel is "The Silver Sixpence."

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The family of NATALIE CURTIS, who was killed in a taxi accident in Paris last year, have added new material for a memorial edition of her volume of American Indian songs, stories, poems and art, "The Indians' Book," which will come out in January. Miss Curtis, who was the wife of Paul Burlin, the artist, made Indian lore her life study; she was one of the first of many now interested in aboriginal American culture.

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EDMUND GOULDING wrote his recently published novel, "Fury," as a vindication, it is said. Mr Goulding felt that he had been treated unjustly in having to share honors with the director for the confecting of the scenario of a recent movie. The movie in question, by the way, seems to have been taken from a story by Joseph Hergesheimer, although the fact does not appear in the publicity note. The title is the same as Hergesheimer's story, anyhow. Be that as it may, Mr. Goulding, to prove he could do that sort of thing unaided, tossed off "Fury," writing it first as a scenario and then as a novel, presumably a reversal of the usual order.

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HOMER CROY, the humorist, is making a determined stand against the insidious progress of feminism. Recently there issued from his home the following missive, handsomely engraved: "Mr and Mrs. Homer Croy wish to announce that on Tuesday morning of this week they gave birth to a bouncing baby girl."

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A novel about Coney Island has at last been written, by JAMES L. FORD. The name, provisionally, is "Hot Corn Ike." Mr. Ford has written several novels, but is best known as a literary critic, having been "Forty-Odd Years in the Literary Shop," according to his own written confession.

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A book on "Sir Douglas Haig's Command," by GEORGE A. B. DEWAR, has just been published in England. Surely it should have been subtitled "In Black and White," and have a preface by Johnny Walker.

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In "Inca Land," MR. HIRAM BINGHAM recommends guinea pig as food. He says it has long been considered a delicacy in Peru, which is its native habitat, and the forethoughtful Peruvian housewife always keeps a few guineas running around the kitchen to fill in for emergencies. The meat is reported to taste like squab.

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No less than sixty-four groups of amateurs produced KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN'S playlet based on her book, "The Birds' Christmas Carol," during Christmas week.

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The New Year will be challenged by a book on "Women of 1923," a feminine "Who's Who," which will cover the whole world of women's activities and those connected therein.

Letters to the Editor

INDELIBLE ERRORS

Dear Mr. Rascoe: I have had it in mind to write to you ever since I read your first notice of Mr. Paul's "Indelible."

At that time I had already read and reviewed the book for "Musical America"; and while I could agree with you that Mr. Paul had shown "a fresh and original method of expression" in saying "new and vivid things," and possibly even that his was "the work of evident genius," I was amazed by your evident failure to perceive some of its worst defects, although you did admit that it was difficult for you to assume a critical attitude toward a book which had moved you so much. I think your review was a perfect illustration of the irrelevancy of emotional reactions to works of art.

To me it seems that Mr. Paul is primarily a social critic, unusually acute in his perceptions and unusually successful in expressing them. I have, in fact, not read anything so devastating as his comment upon Cliftondale, but in this I can find the only perfect or even plausible characterization in the book.

For a destructive intelligence of a high order, while quite sufficient for many purposes, usually does not suffice to write a novel, and Mr. Paul lacks the ability to construct something—a story or a character—with which he is in sympathy, and which, at the same time, carries conviction. Here even his destructive intelligence deserts him and he relapses into the most appalling banality, crudeness and sentimentality. You call it intelligible human drama, but it is neither dramatic nor human and certainly not intelligible. From the entrance of Lena until the bitter end I writhed in discomfort.

So far from citing so-called canons of novel-writing, I am not even acquainted with them, but a literary work must have at least artistic verity, if no other, and the story of Samuel and Lena is false from start to finish. Mr. Farrar wrote that it reminded one slightly of Fannie Hurst, but for such conventionally distorted characters as Lena, her father, the political boss, the old violin-maker, the good-but-bad-but-good Mary and all the rest, I must go back to Bruno Lessing's stories in "The Cosmopolitan," the plays in which David Warfield acted and other artistic products of the same class. As for the plot, which I believe Mr. Farrar called a powerful study in racial temperaments, the nearest approach to it which I can recall is high school fiction. It is a love story of the most primitive sort; when it is not trite it is improbable, and every few pages it has to be kept from breaking down altogether by the use of coincidence, accident and what not; as ineffectual as it is labored. Consider only one, the most important of all, the episode of the piano lid.

It is sufficient that an accompanist never plays with the piano lid raised. Moreover, once the supporting bar is adjusted the lid cannot fall, since the bar fits into a groove and is held there by the weight of the lid. Again, the violinist stands at some distance from the piano with both hands fully occupied, and in this case we are told that Lena's arms were about Samuel's neck when the accident happened. Consider his position at the piano and you can see that her hand could not have been where the lid might have fallen. But even if we concede the point, it is nothing but an obvious, awkward device, and not an effective cause for what follows.

The raised piano lid is, however, only one of a number of musical details that are positively painful to a musician. Music has its own world of affairs in which some things happen and others couldn't. Except in books like "Indelible" there never was such a conservatory as Samuel and Lena attended, there never were such teachers as Samuel and Lena had.

But ultimately I can always fall back upon the ending. It is one of the things that stamp the artist, and the man has little artistic conscience who can cut the loose ends of his work as clumsily and as brazenly as Mr. Paul does. To complete the picture the great violinist should have married Mary, but even she, we feel, is in a better world. Indeed, how could it be otherwise, when even the old horse is taken care of?

B. H. HAGGIN.

552 West 141st Street, New York City.

BERNARD M. BARUCH writes of

THE DRIVER

GARET GARRETT'S financial novel

"It is not a story of literal facts; but through its pages one can see parading the figures of Harriman, Morgan, Schiff, Hill and those great giants who helped the economic development of America in the beginning. I am not competent to express myself upon its merits as a novel. I can say, however, that it grips one from cover to cover. I feel as did Mark Sullivan, who, when commenting upon the book, said to me: 'Garet Garrett has written one of the great novels of the day.' Whether it is a great novel or not, that is beside the point to one who wants to know and study man and his work, and for one who desires to get an insight into practical economies . . . the great interest, and the great worth, of the book lies in its practical teachings on economics, teachings which are of inestimable value in our present-day conditions.

"But I should do the book an injustice, and mislead the readers who will want it primarily for its romantic interest as a novel, if I failed to mention also the attractiveness with which the story, as a story, is told. Here, as in the other part, the thing that impresses me is its fidelity to life."—*Public Ledger*, Phila.

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